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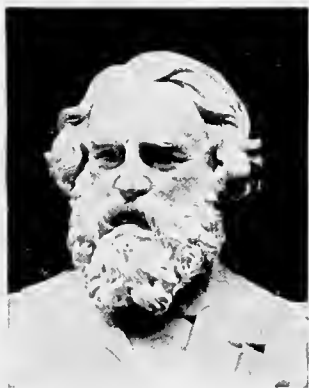


"AND DID YOU EVER SEE MR. LONGFELLOW, AUNTIE?"

STORIES ABOUT FAVORITE AUTHORS

LITTLE LITERATURE LESSONS FOR LITTLE
BOYS AND GIRLS

BY
MRS. FRANCES A. HUMPHREY



WITH PORTRAITS AND AUTOGRAPHS

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Henry W. Longfellow.

Longfellow was born February 27, 1807, in Portland, Maine. He is often called the "Children's Poet."

Among his early poems is *The Village Blacksmith*, whose smithy stood "under a spreading chestnut-tree," in Cambridge, Mass. In that poem, he tells how the

—children coming home from school
Look in at the open door;
They love to see the flaming forge,

And hear the bellows roar,
And catch the burning sparks that fly,
Like chaff from a threshing floor.

In 1879, that tree was cut down, and the school-children of Cambridge brought their bits of money together, and had a chair made from the wood, and gave it to Longfellow, on his seventy-second birthday. The chair stands by the fireplace in his study. Longfellow wrote a poem about it, addressed to the children, beginning, "From My Armchair."

He also gave orders that every child who wished to see that chair, should be admitted, and O, such a pattering of dirty little feet as there was through his entrance hall for months!

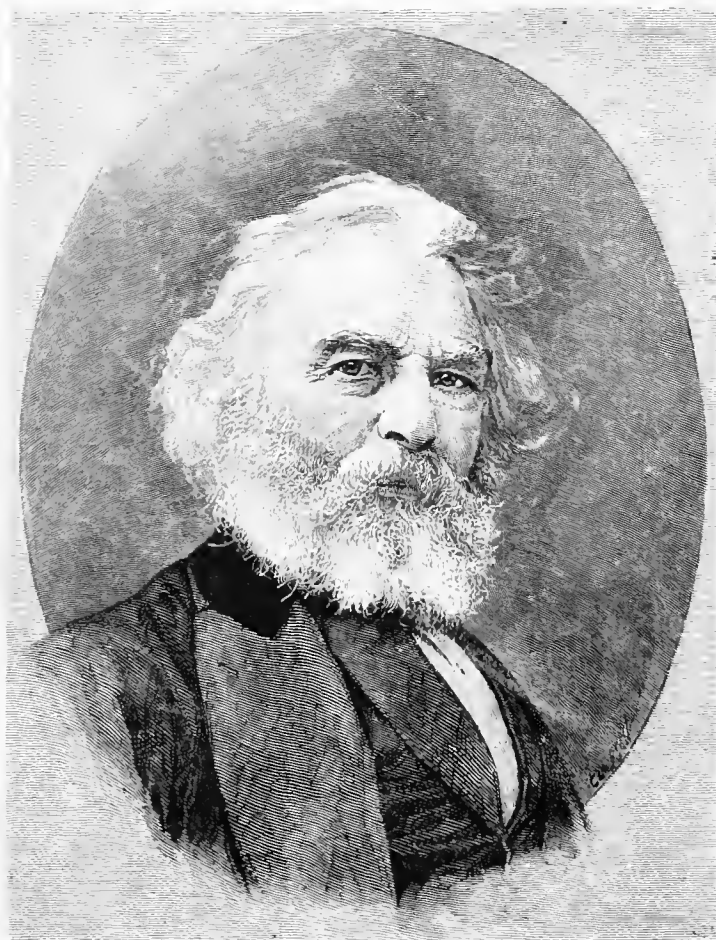
Once he made a speech to one thousand grammar-school children! and he *never* made speeches to grown people. It was on the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Cambridge. After the public exercises were over, the boys and girls crowded around him with their albums for his autograph. He wrote till dinner time obliged him to stop, and then he told those

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who had not yet got his autograph to come to his house for it, *every one*. His house is the old Craigie House. It was once Washington's headquarters; and hundreds of boys and girls have

been there to see Longfellow.

His friend, Signor Monti, met one day a little girl, who, with her mother, was looking for Longfellow's house, and he pointed it out to them. The poet was standing in his study window with his back to the street. Signor Monti went in and said, "Do look out the window, and bow to that little girl who wants to see you."



HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

"A little girl wanting to see me!" replied Longfellow, and going to the hall door he said, "Come here, little girl, come here if you want to see me," and taking her hand he led her in.

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Once he was visiting at a house where there were several little girls. They had a family of dolls, an every-day family and a family of company dolls.

"Now," said Mr. Longfellow, "I want to see your dolls. Not the fine ones you keep for company, but those you love best and play with every day," and so they brought out their shabby, broken-nosed and armless dolls, and told Mr. Longfellow all about them. And such a good time as they had, and he too, for that matter! Here are the nonsense verses he wrote for his own little Edith.

There was a little girl
And she had a little curl
And it hung right down on her forehead,

And when she was good
She was very, very good,
And when she was bad, she was horrid!

His poems are read in England by all classes. Once when he was coming home from the House of Lords, the common people gathered about him begging to touch his hand.

Queen Victoria invited him to visit her at Windsor Castle. As he passed through the long corridors to the Throne Room, the doors on either side opened and he saw people peeping at him! They were the servants of the queen. The queen herself told of this and said, "Such poets wear a crown that is imperishable."

He died March 24, 1882. It was known for several days that he was sick. One day a military company of little five-year-olds as they passed his house, took off their caps, and their drum was silent, because they so loved the dying poet.

Of his poems read *Paul Revere's Ride*, *The Children's Hour*, *The Psalm of Life*, *The Castle-Builder* and *My Lost Youth*; Part III. of *The Song of Hiawatha*, telling of Hiawatha's childhood and old Nokomis, his grandmother. I know a little boy of six who never tires of hearing these poems read.

John G. Whittier

When Longfellow died Whittier wrote a poem, *The Poet and the Children*, which was published in WIDE AWAKE. Of this poem, the first and fourth verses are here given :

With a glory of winter sunshine
Over his locks of gray,
In the old historic mansion,
He sat on his last birthday.

And his heart grew warm within him,
And his moistening eyes grew dim,
For he knew that his country's children
Were singing the songs of him.

This alludes to the delightful custom of the keeping of Longfellow's birthday, by the school-children of America.

Whittier was born December 17, 1807, and his birthday is also kept by the school-children. On his last birthday, his seventy-seventh, the junior class of the Girls' High School, Boston, Mass., sent him a basket of seventy-seven rare and exquisite roses. He replied as follows :

The sun of life is sinking low ;
Without is winter's falling snow.
Within your summer roses fall.

The heart of age your offering cheers,
You count in flowers my many years,
God bless you, one and all !

To the school superintendent in Cincinnati he wrote : " I am glad to be remembered on the 17th instant in the schools of Cincinnati. Little did the barefoot farmer boy on the banks of the Merrimac more than sixty years ago know of the great West, or dream that he would live to be greeted by the united

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voices of the school students and children of a great city on the then almost unknown beautiful river."

Mr. Coffin of Lynn also presented him with a beautiful birthday cake, inscribed, "J. G. W., Dec. 17, 1807-1884." Mr. Coffin presented a portrait of Whittier in 1884 to the Friends' School at Providence, R. I. As you know, Mr. Whittier is a Quaker. A second birthday cake was presented by two ladies.



JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

He was born in a lonely farmhouse, which still stands three miles northeast of the city of Haverhill, Mass. This house is about two hundred years old. There was a brother, and together they did their

nightly chores,
Brought in the wood from out of doors,
Littered the stalls and from the mows
Raked down the herd's grass for the cows.

This he tells us in *Snowbound*, a poem in which you can learn much of his life as a boy. He says:

We piled with care our nightly stack
Of wood against the chimney back,
The oaken log, green, huge and thick,
And on its top the stout back stick.

In *Snowbound*, you will read of the father and mother, the two sisters, the dear aunt and uncle, who made up the happy household.

The younger sister, Elizabeth, was especially beloved by the

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poet. She too, wrote poems, and was a sweet and lovely woman. Read her poems, *Lady Franklin*, and *Dr. Kane in Cuba*. This poem reached Cuba when Dr. Kane was lying on his death-bed. His mother read it to him and he listened with grateful tears.

The mother of the Whittiers was a tender-hearted woman, of whom this pretty story is told by her son, our poet. She never liked to turn a beggar from her door, but one day there came "an olive-complexioned, black-bearded Italian, with an eye like a live coal," who asked that he might stay all night. Feeling afraid of him, she refused, but after he had gone she regretted having done so.

"What if a son of mine were in a strange land?" she thought. So when her son, our poet, came in from the fields, he offered to go and find him and bring him back. He did so, and the tramp proved to be a very pleasant guest. He told stories of his own loved Tuscany, and gave Mrs. Whittier a recipe for "making bread out of chestnuts!"

Mr. Whittier is now a tall, slender, graceful, handsome old man with snow-white hair and bright black eyes. Children are apt to gather around him like bees around a bit of honeycomb. He is a great lover of dogs and is the happy owner of a big Newfoundland and a slender greyhound.

There are so many of his poems that you will like to read, how can I choose? But here are a few: *The Barefoot Boy*, *Telling the Bees*, *My Playmate*, *The Pipes at Lucknow*, *In School Days*, and *Barbara Frietchie*.

Whittier's home for many years was at Amesbury, Mass. But he now lives with friends at Oak Knoll in Danvers, so called from its fine oaks. A part of each winter he spends in Boston.

Lucy Larcom

Lucy Larcom lives in Beverly, Mass., in which town she was born. She has so pretty a name, that people who do not know her, often think it is not her real name. Mrs. Whitney thinks her name comes from Lark-combe, which means the hamlet, or valley-field of larks. That is a lovely and fit name for this poetess, who sings as the lark sings.

She began to write verses, it seems, when she was seven years old. She not only wrote but illustrated them, in water colors, and so published them herself, and for herself. The book was in manuscript of course, as she was not so fortunate as many little people of our day who have printing-presses. After she had kept it and enjoyed it a little while by herself, she put it carefully away — in a bookcase? No; in a deep, deep crack in the old garret floor, wherein it disappeared; and what happened to it there, nobody can tell but the rats and mice, who often know more about what becomes of people's things, than the people do themselves.

When Lucy Larcom was still a little girl, her father died, and the mother, with the eight daughters, shortly after went to live in Lowell. After a while, Lucy went to work in the mills there as a "little doffer;" that is, she took off empty bobbins and put on full ones. Only American girls worked in the mills then, and some of the girls formed a literary club to which Lucy Larcom belonged. They had a paper called, *The Lowell Offering*. I remember reading it when a girl and finding it very entertaining.

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Lucy Larcom afterwards went to the then new State of Illinois, where she taught school. The schoolhouse was of logs and there was an enormous chimney. One day a naughty, disobedient girl was told by Miss Larcom to "go and stand in the chimney."

She did so and presently disappeared! She had gone out of doors by way of the chimney!

After a few more years of teaching and studying, Miss Larcom became one of the associate editors of *Our Young Folks*, a Boston magazine your mothers read when they were girls. She was also for a time its chief editor. So she has been working in various ways for little people, as well as for their elders, almost all her life.



LUCY LARCOM.

How many of you have read her *Little Bridget's Christmas Flowers*, printed in *WIDE AWAKE* in 1884? The poor little city girl, Bridget, who, having lived through the joys of a Country Week, recalled them—the flowers, the squirrels, the birds, the haymaking, as she lay sick and weary—

On her shabby trundle bed,
Covered with a threadbare spread—

watching the exquisite frost-flowers on her window-pane.

And her heart with joy grew faint :
"Mother, did the angels paint
Flowers and ferns I used to see
For a Christmas gift to me?"

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We like sometimes to know what books people have read and loved when they were children, and we learn that Lucy Larcom used to like *Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Scottish Chiefs*. She used to read, too, Milton's *Paradise Lost*. This is a book that most children do not care for, though I know one little lady who at eight knew it by heart. She read such old ballads as *Cherry Chase*. These are all grown people's books, but such as some children will like.

Lucy Larcom has been almost a life-long friend of the poet Whittier and his sister Elizabeth. Together with Mr. Whittier she has collected and edited *Child-life in Prose*, and *Child-life in Poetry*.

Of her poems you must certainly read *Pussy Clover*, *The Brown Thrush*, *Redtop and Timothy*, and then as many more as you please. You will like, I am sure, to read the poems of one who has written:—

Through the gladness of little children
Are the frostiest lives kept warm.

J. B. Alrich.

Our Young Folks had an orange-colored cover. It was taken at our house for a certain young person, though I think the young person often had to wait for the older ones to read it first.

One year a delightful serial story was published in it with this title, *The Story of a Bad Boy*. The boy's name was Tom Bailey. He was not really a bad boy. He was only full of life and fun, in one word—a boy.

He was born in Rivermouth, N. H., and went very early in life with his father and mother to live in New Orleans. After a few years he came back to his grandfather's in Rivermouth to go to school. He had some very queer ideas, he tells us, about the North. He thought Indians were plenty, and that they "occasionally dashed down on New York and scalped" a few women and children, mostly children. The houses he supposed were log-cabins.

On the voyage up from New Orleans he became acquainted with a sailor known as "Sailor Ben." Sailor Ben told no end of fascinating stories, and had interesting pictures tattooed all over his arms.

The various adventures of Tom Bailey and his companions were most delightful reading. How we laughed over them! One month we read about a play they had in Captain Nutter's—Tom's grandfather's—barn. They played *William Tell*. Tom was William Tell

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and Pepper Whitcomb was Tell's son. Just as Tom was about to shoot the apple on Pepper's head, the latter gaped, and the arrow went straight into his mouth!

Another time they cleaned and loaded and fired a half-dozen old cannon which lay by the wharves. They fired them by means of a fuse. Tom Bailey lighted the fuse at midnight on Fourth of July eve. He got out of his chamber window, and had just time to scramble back again over the porch, and into bed, before the first cannon went off.

One after another they went off with a fearful *boom, boom*, for they were so old they burst. The people were terrified. They thought the town was being bombarded. The next day the bursted cannon were found, but nobody knew who the rogues were.

Sailor Ben helped the boys in this scrape. Sailor Ben had left off going to sea and settled in Rivermouth. He had built him a house and finished it like a ship's cabin. He slept in a bunk, and had a stove such as ships' cooks have in their galley, with a railing around it to keep the pots and kettles from sliding off in a high sea.

Sailor Ben and the Rivermouth boys were excellent friends.

The writer of this charming *Story of a Bad Boy* is Thomas Bailey Aldrich, and the Tom Bailey in the book is just himself,



THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH.

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and it is a story, a true story of his own boyhood. It is exquisitely written. The reading of it is a lesson in pure and elegant English. Rivermouth is Portsmouth, N. H.

Mr. Aldrich is a poet, as well as a writer of essays and stories. His poem, "Baby Bell," is a great favorite. This lovely Baby Bell lingered a brief time in this world of ours and then "he came":

The messenger from unseen lands;
And what did dainty Baby Bell?
She only crossed her little hands,
She only looked more meek and fair!
We parted back her silken hair,

We wove the roses round her brow,
White buds, the summer's drifted snow—
Wrapt her from head to foot in flowers,
And thus went dainty Baby Bell
Out of this world of ours!

The following poem he wrote for the *Children's Almanac*:

When every stocking was stuffed with dolls, and balls, and rings,	"Quite like a stocking," he laughed, "pinned up there on the tree!
Whistles, and tops, and dogs (of all conceivable things!)	I didn't suppose the birds expected a present from me!"
Old Kriss Kringle looked round, and saw on the elm-tree bough,	Then old Kriss Kringle, who loves a joke as well as the best,
High-hung, an oriole's nest, lonely and empty now.	Dropped a handful of flakes in the oriole's empty nest.

Mr. Aldrich now lives in Boston, and is editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, another yellow-covered magazine bearing otherwise, however, little resemblance to the magazine in which was printed his *Story of a Bad Boy*.

My young wife —

Once upon a time, there was a magazine club in a country town in Western Massachusetts. This club took *Harper's*, the *Atlantic*, the *Overland*, the *Living Age*, in short, all the magazines worth having for the big folks. There was no *Century* magazine then.

But one magazine only was taken for the little people—that magazine of which I have already told you so much, *Our Young Folks*. And now I must tell you what one member of that club said to me one day. It was Deacon R——, a tall grave man.

“I think after all,” said the tall grave man, “that I really enjoy *Our Young Folks* better than all the other magazines put together! I like Jack Hazard, for I know all about canal-life.”

Now Jack Hazard was the hero of a serial story which was then being printed in *Our Young Folks*. It was called *Jack Hazard and His Fortunes*, and the author was J. T. Trowbridge, who was the editor-in-chief of the magazine. Jack Hazard was a canal-boy, and a very capital story Mr. Trowbridge tells us about him.

He has written many other stories for boys. *The Tinkham Brothers' Tide-mill* is one of his latest and best. If you read it, you will become acquainted with some very plucky boys and nice girls, whom you will find in it.

Mr. Trowbridge was born in Ogden, New York, September 17, 1827. His boyhood was passed on a farm, which is the reason why

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he can tell us so well about a boy's farm life. He did not have much chance to go to school, and when he was fourteen he began the study of German and French by himself. There is a story

about him which has been often told, but which you may never have heard.

Several winters ago, he was passing Mystic Pond, just as a boy had broken through the ice. He was struggling in the water, and a group of men were watching him from the bank, but doing nothing to help him. Mr. Trowbridge seized a board from the fence, and broke it into two pieces, each about seven feet long.



J. T. TROWBRIDGE.

By slipping along over the ice with a foot on each piece of board he reached the place where the boy was sinking. The ice gave way, and he himself went into the water, but he succeeded in getting the boy on to a board, and then scrambled out himself, wet and dripping.

The Humane Society afterwards presented him with a medal for having saved a life.

Like many other of our authors, Mr. Trowbridge is a poet as well as a writer of stories. Here is a lovely bit from a poem called "Midwinter":

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I watch the slow flakes as they fall
On bank and brier and broken wall;
Over the orchard, waste and brown,
All noiselessly they settle down,
Tipping the apple-boughs, and each
Light quivering twig of plum and peach.
On turf and curb and bower-roof
The snowstorm spreads its ivory woof;

It paves with pearl the garden walk;
And lovingly round tattered stalk
And shivering stem its magic weaves
A mantle fair as lily-leaves.
The hooded beehive, small and low,
Stands like a maiden in the snow;
And the old door-slab is half hid
Under an alabaster lid.

And here follows a companion picture from "Midsummer".

I watch the mowers, as they go
Through the tall grass, a white-sleeved row.
With even stroke their scythes they swing.
In tune their merry whetstones ring.
Behind the nimble youngsters run,

And toss the thick swaths in the sun.
The cattle graze, while, warm and still,
Slopes the broad pasture, basks the hill.
And bright, where summer breezes break,
The green wheat crinkles like a lake.

Then there is his amusing poem of "Darius Green" and his flying machine:

An aspiring genius was D. Green:
The son of a farmer — age fourteen:
His body was long and lank and lean,—

Just right for flying, as will be seen;
He had two eyes as bright as a bean,
And a freckled nose that grew between.

If you wish to know how he succeeded in flying you must read the poem. He tells "The Story of Columbus," in verse. It is told in ten brief poems, viz: "Columbus and his little Son Diego," "Columbus and the Prior," "Before the King and Queen of Spain," "Before the Wise Men of Salamanca," "Queen Isabella," "The Voyage," "Discovery of the New World," "Return to Spain," "The Courtiers and the Egg," "His Reward." You should read it. It is in the volume entitled *The Emigrant's Story*.

Mr. Trowbridge lives at Arlington, Mass., a quiet, green village not far from Boston. He is to be met in the city on nearly all pleasant occasions. His brown hair is frosting over now, but his smile is as sunshiny as ever, and his eyes are the kindest eyes ever seen, and his voice and his manner match his eyes.

Harriet Beecher Stowe

To-day we see the tulip blossoming in almost every garden — white, pink, scarlet and crimson — how gay they are! and cheap, too. You can buy a bulb that will give you a gorgeous blossom, for a small sum. But seventy years ago, tulip bulbs were worth a great deal of money.

In those far-away days, a certain mother had a bag of precious tulip bulbs put away, waiting for the time to come when she could plant them. This same mother had, too, a busy, mischievous little daughter.

One day this mischievous little daughter found the bag of precious bulbs: she thought they were onions and she liked onions, so with the help of her brothers and sisters the rare bulbs were soon eaten.

Did the mother scold when she found what they had done? The little daughter herself tells us years after. "She (the mother) sat down and calmly, sweetly, told them what lovely tulips would have risen from those roots had they spared them." She did not speak one impatient word.

The mother was Mrs. Roxana Beecher, and the daughter is the author whom we know as Harriet Beecher Stowe.

When Harriet was seven years old, her older sister, Catherine, writes that, "she is a very good girl. She has been to school all this summer, and has learned to read fluently. She has committed to memory twenty-seven hymns and two long chapters in

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the Bible. She has a very retentive memory and will make a good scholar."

One of Harriet's early teachers was John Pierce Brace, and it seems that he excelled in teaching composition. He gave her such thorough training in this art that when she was eleven, she was appointed one of the writers for the annual exhibition. I don't know what you would think of the subject that was given her. It wasn't "Spring" nor "Goats." It was a very difficult one. But she wrote her composition.

The compositions were read aloud. Among the gentlemen on the platform was her father. Rev. Lyman Beecher.

"When mine was read," said Mrs. Stowe, "I noticed that father brightened and looked interested, and at the close I heard him say:

"Who wrote that composition?"

"Your daughter, sir," was the answer.

"It was the proudest moment of my life," adds Mrs. Stowe.

In the very first number of *Our Young Folks*, if I remember aright, was a story by Mrs. Stowe, called, "Hum, the Son of Buz." Who Hum was I must leave you to find out. The story was the beginning of a series which has since been gathered into a book with the title, *Queer Little People*.

The little Harriet must have learned much about these same



HARRIET BEECHER STOWE.

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"Little People" while running wild over the hills of Litchfield, Conn., where she was born June 14, 1811. She was "a hearty, rosy, strong girl; with flying curls of sunny brown, and sweet, keen, blue-gray eyes."

Many years have gone by since then, and during these years she has written many books. *Little Pussy Willow* was published as a serial in *Our Young Folks*, and a very lovely story it is. And Pussy Willow with her quaint name, and her helpful, loving ways, is one of the most delightful children in literature.

March 20, 1852, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was published. Many of you have heard of this book. Your grandfathers and grandmothers will tell you how they sat up nights to read it when it came out, and how they cried over Eva, and laughed over Topsy and her doings. Ten thousand copies* were sold in a few days, and over three hundred thousand within a year. It has been translated into nineteen different languages. Oliver Wendell Holmes alludes to this fact in some verses read at a garden party, given in honor of Mrs. Stowe's seventieth birthday. He says, "if every tongue that speaks her praise"

Were summoned to the table —
Briton and Frenchman, Swede and Dane,
Turk, Spaniard, Tartar of Ukraine,
Hidalgo, Cossack, Cadi,

High Dutchman and Low Dutchman, too,
The Russian Serf, the Polish Jew,
Arab, Armenian, and Mantchoo,
Would shout, "We know the lady!"

Edward Everett Hale says, that of all stories ever written in the English tongue none have been so widely read as these three: *Robinson Crusoe*, *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; all books that children will like.

Mrs. Stowe spends her summers in Hartford, Conn., and her winters at Mandarin, Fla., where she owns a beautiful and productive orange grove.

Nathaniel Hawthorne.

A little while ago, I was reading a very interesting book, when I came across this: "A History of Twenty Days with Julian and Bunny." I found it a charming history; it begins thus:

"At seven o'clock A. M. Una and Rosebud took their departure, leaving Julian and me and Mrs. Peters (the colored lady who does our cooking for us) and Bunny, the rabbit, in possession of the Red Shanty." And then it goes on to tell all about what "Julian and me" and Bunny did during those twenty days. Bunny spent a good deal of time "nibbling clover-tops, lettuce, plantain leaves, pigweed and crumbs of bread." Julian changed his (Bunny's) name from Spring to Hindlegs, and every day when they ("Julian and me") returned from their walk, Bunny gave them a joyful greeting, snuffing eagerly about them to find the leaf of mint they were sure to bring him.

But alas! one day Bunny had a chill and died, and "after breakfast we dug a hole and planted him in the garden and Julian said: 'Perhaps to-morrow there will be a tree of Bunny's and they will hang all over it by their ears.'"

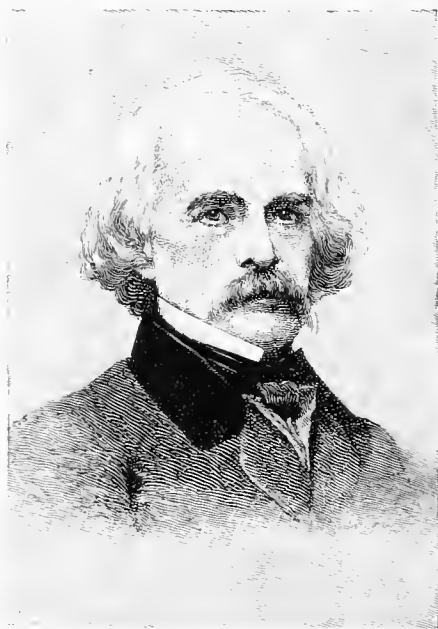
As to Julian, he had a good time right straight along through the twenty days, playing with Bunny till Bunny died, fishing with bent pins, sailing the boat that he had whittled out himself on the pond, making a bow and arrows, and playing jackstraws by himself. And Julian says, in the interesting book I read, that those twenty days were "haleyon days." (The ancients believed

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that the kingfisher or halcyon laid her eggs by the sea on certain calm, fair days, and so they got in the way, and we do the same, of calling all lovely days halcyon days.)

Now you will want to know who "Julian and me" were, and where the Red Shanty was. The Red Shanty was a red farmhouse in Lenox, Mass., the "me" was Nathaniel Hawthorne, the great romancer, and "Julian" was his five-year-old son.

They lived but a short time in Lenox, these five, the father and mother, Una, Julian, and Rose, but it was a "paradise for the small people." They used to go nutting and filled a certain disused oven in the house with such bags on bags of nuts as not an hundred children could have devoured during the ensuing winter. The children's father displayed extraordinary activity on these nutting expeditions; standing on the ground at the foot of a tall walnut-tree, he would bid them turn their backs and cover their eyes with their hands; then they would hear, for a few seconds, a sound of rustling and scrambling, and immediately after, a shout, whereupon they would uncover their eyes and gaze upward; and lo! there was their father—swaying and soaring high aloft on the topmost branches. Then down would rattle showers of ripe nuts which the children would diligently pick up and stuff into their capacious bags. It was all a splendid holiday; and they cannot



NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

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remember when their father was not their playmate, or when they ever desired or imagined any other playmate than he." So writes the grown-up Julian Hawthorne.

It was while living in Lenox that Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote the *Wonder Book for Girls and Boys*, wherein is to be found the story of Little Pandora and her Box, from which she let out the stinging troubles; the story of the slaying by Hercules of the fearful Gorgon, the sight of whose face turned people into stone; of the flying horse Pegasus with his silvery wings, and many others, all written in that exquisite style of which the great romancer was a master. He also wrote for boys and girls, *Tanglewood Tales*, similar to those in the *Wonder Book*, and *True Stories from History and Biography*.

Of his books for grown people, it is difficult to tell which is most admired. The *Scarlet Letter*, the *House of the Seven Gables*, *The Blithedale Romance*, *The Marble Faun*, each has its special admirers. With the writer of this *Our Old Home* is a great favorite. He was born July 4, 1804, and died April, 1864.

Margaret Sidney

A few years ago there was a story in the *Wide Awake* magazine that touched the hearts of little readers as no magazine-story had before, or has since. Little boys and girls wrote letters to the editors about it, and when they visited Boston they came into the editors' office to talk about it.

Each month, as a new chapter was published, there was a fresh clapping of glad little hands, and the editors knew then that the taste of American children had *not* been spoiled; for this magical story was not a fairy story, nor a wonderful adventure, nor a tale of a beautiful princess in a palace, but was just about a family of five children who loved their mother and lived in a small brown house. But, oh! they loved her so dearly, and they had so good times in the old house, and the eldest sister, Polly, was so brave even if she were only picking out basting threads, and the eldest brother, Ben, was so brave too, even if he were only splitting wood, and the little boys, Joel and David, were so funny, and little Phronsie was so sweet and so funny too, that the story set all children everywhere to wishing that they were poor and lived in a wee brown house.

One day, two little New York girls, whose father has millions of dollars, came to Boston and told the editors of *Wide Awake* that it was no use to try to be good like the little Peppers, because you could not unless you were poor and lived in a small

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old house; and they were very serious and very discouraged because they were rich children and lived in a fine brown-stone mansion.

The title of this bewitching story was *Five Little Peppers*, and its author, Margaret Sidney, who has written many other books, should be very happy that she wrote this one. Little boys and girls are constantly reading it, for the book is published anew every year, and it has been published in England, and the English children are reading it. It has become what is called "a children's classic."

One funny little girl who read the story in *Wide Awake*, and who has it also in a pretty volume by itself, wrote to the editors not long since, and asked them to please to publish it again in the magazine, because she wished so much to read it again month by month as she did at first.



MARGARET SIDNEY.

As I said, Margaret Sidney has written other stories for children, and many for grown people which you will read by and by. She wrote your own jolly story of *Polly the Parrot*. I think you may like "next best" to *Five Little Peppers*, the book called *What the Seven Did*.

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As you look at her portrait you can see that her heart is full of sunshine. She has sunny eyes and sunny hair and a sunny smile, and her voice is quick and glad. If you should see her and hear her speak, you would be sure that she would understand all about any brave, true, joyous little child.

She was like a story-book child herself when she was a little girl. She lived then in New Haven, Conn. Just here I would like to tell you her name then, and her name now, for "Margaret Sidney" is only her book-name. But I think I will not. I will only tell you that she now lives in Boston. Her summer home is the house where Mr. Hawthorne once lived—the famous "Wayside."

It is told of her that when she was but a little toddler, she always had some other little toddler in charge who was smaller and weaker than herself; and it did not matter at all if her dearest playmates were poor—if they were good, true little children, Margaret Sidney liked them "just the same;" and she liked best the ones who needed her help the most.

One day she was found holding open the large bag for the ragman—the clumsy old tin-peddler who, in those days, drove from house to house and from town to town to buy the "paper-rags," for which he paid with tin and glass-ware. The old man was grateful to the small Margaret, and presented her with a little scalloped cookey-tin, which she gravely accepted and kept. The shouts of the older children made no difference to her.

"He was glad, and he thanked me," she said.

She likes still to help, she likes still to make glad; and it is this spirit in her sunshiny stories that draws to her the love of children.

L. M. Alcott.

We learn from Miss Alcott's own book, *Little Women*, what she was and what she did when she was a girl. For, as every reader of that book knows, Miss Alcott is her own "Jo."

She was "tall and thin and brown, and reminded one of a colt, for she never seemed to know what to do with her long limbs, which were very much in her way. She had a decided mouth, a comical nose, and sharp, gray eyes which appeared to see everything, and were by turns fierce, or funny, or thoughtful. Her long, thick hair was her only beauty, but it was usually bundled into a net to be out of the way. Round shoulders had Jo, and big hands and feet, and a fly-away look to her clothes." That is "Jo," or the young Louisa Alcott, as she pictures herself in *Little Women*.

She was that excellent creature, a tomboy. A girl that likes to climb trees, to skate and to coast, to play ball, to swim, to row, to live out-of-doors and to do the things boys do, is apt to be called a "tomboy." And it is well to have the courage to be called a "tomboy." For it is only by vigorous out-of-door games and sport, that a girl, as well as a boy, can grow up strong and healthy, with vigor to do life's work.

Miss Alcott was born in Germantown, Pa., in 1832. In 1834 her parents removed to Boston, Mass., where Mr. Alcott opened a school. And it was while she was in Boston, before she was

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eight years old, that she had become so lithe and active that she could drive a hoop entirely round the Common without stopping to take breath.

In 1840 the family moved to Concord, Mass., which town has,



LOUISA MAY ALCOTT.

since that time, been Miss Alcott's home. You have all heard of the Battle of Lexington and Concord, and this is the Concord where the battle was fought.

Miss Alcott liked to scribble when she was a little girl. At eight years of age she wrote some verses, which the good mother kept with "tender care," proud of her daughter's work, as most mothers are. I think I shall have to

give you that little poem here. It is an "Address to a Robin."

Welcome, welcome, little stranger,
Fear no harm and fear no danger;
We are glad to see you here,
For you sing sweet spring is near.

Now the snow is nearly gone,
Now the grass is coming on —
The trees are green, the sky is blue,
And we are glad to welcome you.

She liked story-telling then, too, as well as she does now, and used to frighten her sisters after they went to bed at night with fearful stories. And when she taught school as she did for some years, there was one hour in the school-day called the story-tell-

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ing hour, when she told stories to her pupils, and should not you like to have been one of those pupils?

An early schoolmate of Miss Alcott's gives in *Wide Awake* for 1880, a pleasant account of going to Louisa's birthday party. The Alcott girls acted dramas and sang songs. Annie, the Meg of *Little Women*, dressed as a Highlander, recited a Scotch ballad; and Louisa appeared in the costume of an Indian girl and sang the "Blue Juniata," a popular song of those days. She had stained her skin an Indian red.

The little May of *Little Women*, the real May, afterwards became Mrs. Nieriker. She was an artist, and died in 1879, leaving her little daughter, Louisa May Nieriker, to Miss Alcott's care.

It would be like "carrying coals to Newcastle" to give you the names of Miss Alcott's many books, all which you doubtless know. But if she should live to write an hundred (and I dare say you hope she may) *Little Women* would still be without a rival in the affection of all girls.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

One of the most charming, perhaps the most charming, *you* will say, of Bryant's poems is the one entitled, "Robert of Lincoln." Under the disguise of that grave and discreet name, you will at once recognize our rollicking friend the bob-o'-link:

Robert of Lincoln is gayly dressed,
Wearing a bright black wedding coat;
White are his shoulders and white his crest,
Hear him call in his merry note:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
Look, what a nice new coat is mine,
Sure there was never a bird so fine.
Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln's Quaker wife,
Pretty and quiet, with plain brown wings,
Passing at home a patient life,
Broods in the grass while her husband sings:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
Brood, kind creature; you need not fear
Thieves and robbers while I am here.
Chee, chee, chee.

Modest and shy as a nun is she;
One weak chirp is her only note.
Braggart and prince of braggarts is he,
Pouring boasts from his little throat:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
Never was I afraid of man;
Catch me, cowardly knaves, if you can.
Chee, chee, chee.

Six white eggs on a bed of hay,
Flecked with purple, a pretty sight!
There as the mother sits all day,
Robert is singing with all his might:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
Nice good wife, that never goes out,
Keeping house while I frolic about.
Chee, chee, chee.

William Cullen Bryant was born in Cummington, Mass., November 3, 1794. His father was a physician. Doctor Bryant was a lover of poetry and of music, and his library was made up mostly of books of poetry, and the necessary medical works.

His little son William Cullen, or "Cullen," as his mother called him, began to write verses at the age of nine. At ten some of these were printed in the local newspaper. His father was his

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critic, and a severe one too, and insisted upon his writing "only when he had something to say"—an excellent bit of advice.

The Bryants were noted for their bodily strength, and Doctor



WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

Bryant was so strong he "could pick up a barrel of cider and lift it into a cart over the wheel."

The mother of our poet was a hard-working woman (there were seven children) and she lived at the time when many women were obliged to spin and weave the material for the family clothing and household linen. She kept a diary of events and here are one or two bits from it: "Made Austin a coat;" "Spun

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thirty knots of linen." "Taught Cullen his letters." "Wove four yards and went a-quilting." "Washed and ironed."

The little Cullen was sent to school, when four years old, and he remembers standing bareheaded one time in a summer rain, because the children told him if he did, it would make his hair grow. At another time, he fell asleep, and was much ashamed to find himself in the teacher's arms, when he woke, held just like a baby — *he* a big boy of four!

In 1810 he entered William's College. He did not graduate, though the college afterwards gave him his degree. When seventeen he wrote his famous poem called "Thanatopsis."

Mr. Bryant began the practice of law in Great Barrington, Mass. Here he was married June 11, 1821, to Fanny Fairchild. The ceremony took place in an old-fashioned white frame house which is still standing. Fanny Fairchild was nineteen and an orphan, and this is what her husband says of her: "She was a very pretty blonde — small in person, with light brown hair, gray eyes, a graceful shape, a dainty foot, transparent and delicate hands, and a wonderfully frank and sweet expression of face."

In 1825 he removed to New York. Within the year he took an editorial position on *The Evening Post*, and was connected with that paper till he died, a period of over fifty years.

For more than thirty years his summer home was at Roslyn, Long Island. It was called Cedarmere. He died in 1878. November 3, 1884, there was a tree-planting on the village green at Roslyn, of trees grown at Cedarmere, to commemorate his birthday. The first tree was planted by Mr. Bryant's old servants.

Of Bryant's poems you will like especially, I think, his lines "To a Waterfowl," and "The Planting of the Apple-tree."

Oliver Wendell Holmes.

A good many years ago, I cannot say exactly how many, a company of young people were making merry over a new poem by a certain young poet. The poem was called "The September Gale," and the title certainly has a sober air, although the poem is an exceedingly merry poem.

That young poet was Oliver Wendell Holmes, and since that time he has written many merry poems to make people laugh, as well as some pathetic ones. "The Last Leaf," which is both merry and sad, was a favorite with our beloved President, Abraham Lincoln.

Dr. Holmes (for he is a physician as well as poet, essayist, and story-teller) was born in Cambridge, Mass., in an old house with a gambrel roof which is still standing on the college grounds. Not long since, I walked around it; its lilac hedges were just coming into leaf.

In a little old almanac, which is still in existence, this entry is made, dated August 29, 1809: "*Son b.;*" which means "Son born," and it was written by his father, and that is the date of the son's birth.

He is sometimes called our patriotic poet, because he has written so many patriotic poems and songs. The poem that first made him famous is a patriotic poem. Every American school-boy has, sometime, to "speak" that poem; it is called "The Old Constitution," and it begins in this way:

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Ay, tear her tattered ensign down !
Long has it waved on high,
And many an eye has danced to see
That banner in the sky :

Beneath it rung the battle shout,
And burst the cannon's roar,—
The meteor of the ocean air
Shall sweep the clouds no more.

The government had made up its mind to take in pieces the *Constitution*, but the people said "No! we cannot have the gallant old frigate torn in pieces," and Dr. Holmes, then a young

man, said so too in his fine verses, which were printed far and wide, and the government changed its mind.

Dr. Holmes tells us that he wrote this poem in the White Chamber of the old gambrel-roofed house. *Stans pede in uno*, which is Latin for "standing on one foot." The verses are very stirring, and it is not to be wondered at that the



OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

boys like to "speak" them. It is a poem that everybody likes.

To this old gambrel-roofed house was attached an old-fashioned flower-garden, that is, a garden that had cinnamon roses, and blush roses, and garden-lilies, and hollyhocks, and such old-fashioned plants. In course of time these plants disappeared, and the garden became grass-grown. And when the boy Oliver became a man, he remembered the old garden, and thought he should like to have it back again.

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So he had the old-fashioned things planted over again. He remembered, that when he was a boy, a row of sunflowers grew in this garden that the yellow birds visited, and so he had a row of sunflowers planted, to see if the yellow birds would come back again.

And lo! when the sunflowers had grown and blossomed, there were the yellow birds! Not the same—O dear, no! but some just like them—and they flew as merrily and gracefully about the great rayed flowers, as did the yellow birds of his young days.

In 1847 Dr. Holmes was appointed Professor of Anatomy in the Medical School of Harvard University, where he remained until a few years ago.

He has written many books of interest to grown people, besides many poems which children will like, although not written especially for them. The history of a "One Hoss Shay" is as "diverting" as was "John Gilpin." The "One Hoss Shay,"

That was made in such a wonderful way
That it run a hundred years to a day.

Dr. Holmes lives in Boston, on Beacon street, in a pleasant house which looks out upon Charles River.

Alice Cary

Phoebe Cary

Our old brown homestead reared its walls
From the wayside dust aloof,
Where the apple-boughs could almost cast
Their fruit upon its roof;
And the cherry tree so near it grew
That when awake I've lain
In the lonesome nights, I've heard the limbs
As they creaked against the pane;
And those orchard trees! O those orchard trees!
I've seen my little brothers rocked
In their tops by the summer breeze.

* * * * *

We had a well—a deep, old well,
Where the spring was never dry,
And the cool drops down from the mossy stones
Were falling constantly:
And there never was water half so sweet
As the draught which filled my cup
Drawn up to the curb by the rude, old sweep,
That my father's hand set up;
And that deep, old well! O, that deep, old well!
I remember now the plashing sound
Of the bucket as it fell.

That is what Phoebe Cary writes of the old house wherein she was born. September 4, 1824. It stood in the Miami Valley about eight miles from Cincinnati. Alice Cary was born April 26, 1820. She too has written about the old house and here is the bit from her verse:

Low and little, and black and old,
With children many as it can hold
All at the windows open wide,—
Heads and shoulders clear outside:

And fair young faces all ablush:
Perhaps you may have seen, some day,
Roses crowding the self-same way,
Out of a wilding, wayside bush.

This little brown house was a frame house, and was, therefore, a degree above the log-cabins which were scattered over the region roundabout; for the Cary sisters were born at a time when Ohio was far "out West." This brown house had a blossoming cherry-tree in springtime, and a fragrant sweetbrier

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at its windows, and it was brimming over with nine children. The family were poor, and the little girls helped the mother to do the housework, and learned to knit and cook, and spin, and sweep, and dust. The schoolhouse, where they went to school, was a mile and a half away. One day when they were returning from school, Alice picked up a freshly cut switch, and stuck it in the ground, saying: "Let us stick it in the ground and see if it will grow?" The friend who tells this story says, that she saw, thirty-five years after, the tall tree into which this switch had grown.

They had but few books in the little brown house — no children's books. As they grew up, and wanted to study and write, they did this after their day's work was done, at night; and when they could not have a candle, a saucer of lard with a bit of rag for a wick, served instead.

They began writing verses when they were young girls, and in 1850, made their first visit East. They visited Whittier, and among his poems you will find one called "The Singer," and it begins thus:



ALICE CAREY.

PHOEBE CAREY.

Years since (but names to me before)
Two sisters sought at eve my door;

Two song-birds wandering from their nest
A gray old farm-house in the West.

In November of this same year, Alice Cary came to New York, which from that time was her home till her death. In the spring of 1851, Phoebe with a younger sister followed her, and together they made a home in the big city. They rented a flat,

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and kept house, supporting themselves by their writing, and living in an economical way.

In 1856, they moved into their pretty house in Twentieth street. This pretty house became a centre of literary life in New York, at that time. It was a lovely house, and you may read all about it in Mary Clemmer's *Life of the Cary Sisters*.

A great many baby girls were named for Alice Cary, and each mother sent her a photograph of her namesake. A visitor saw these photographs in her room one day, and said: "Who are these little girls?" "*Mine!*" replied Alice with a laugh. "They are all Alice Cary's."

Alice Cary died February 13, 1870, and Phœbe July 31, 1871. Both these sisters were fond of children, Alice liking little girls the best, and Phœbe, little boys. They wrote many pretty ballads for children: "The Settler's Christmas Eve," and "The Christmas Sheaf," being two of them.





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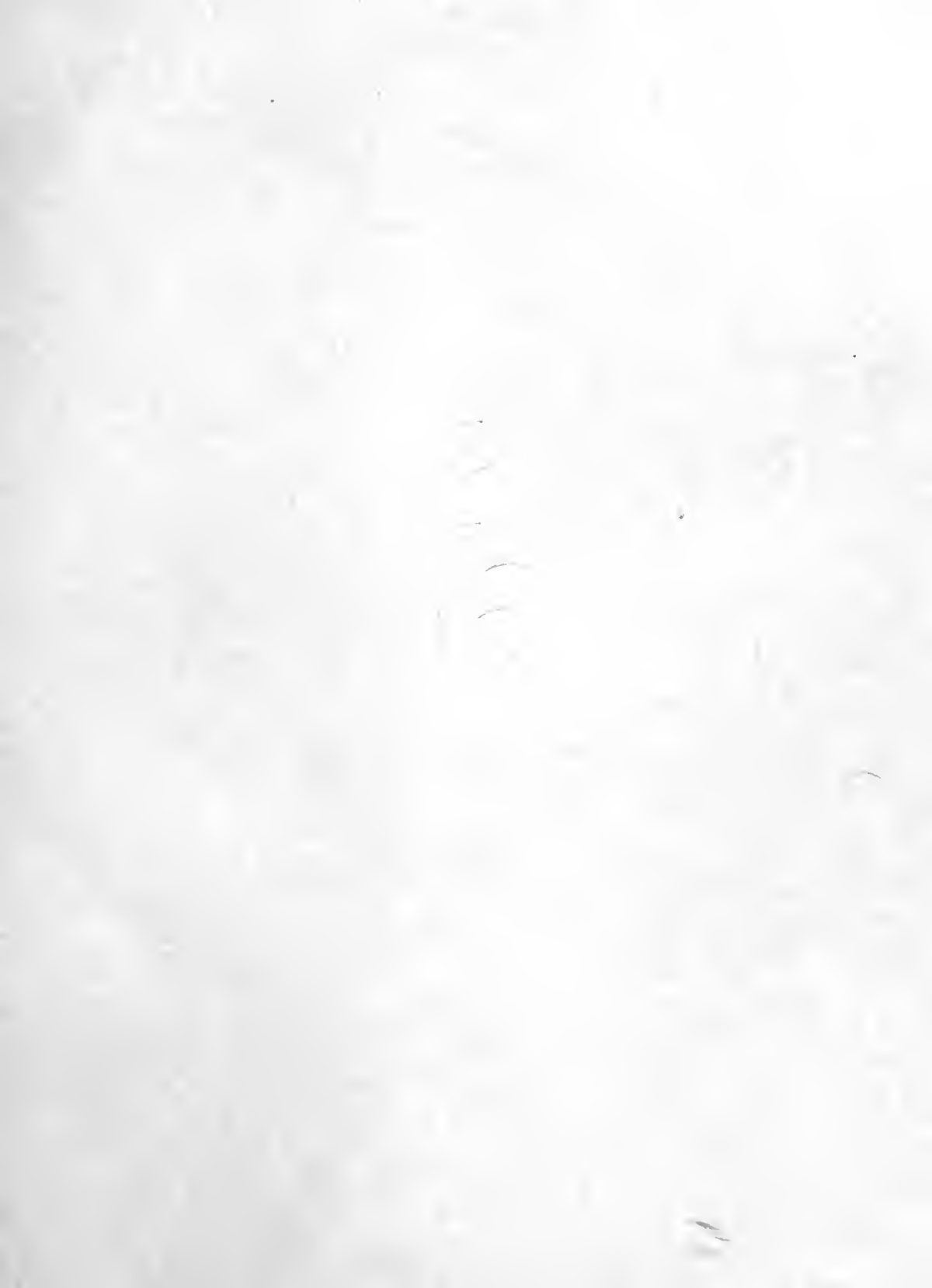
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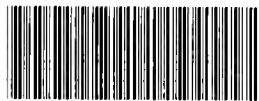
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